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### Speirs Lock Masterplan

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# project introduction

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Edinburgh School of Architecture & Landscape Architecture

## Project Description

Chris Rankin and Kenny Fraser are Founding Partner's at Rankin Fraser Landscape Architecture and designed the Speirs Locks masterplan in Glasgow in collaboration with Ewan Anderson and Lisa Findlay of 7N Architects, Kevin Murray of Kevin Murray Associates and Arts Consultant KOAN 3. Fraser and Rankin's role encompassed all aspects of Landscape Architectural engagement within the masterplan study. The most significant specific research unique to the project was the delivery vehicle or innovative approach taken by the Design Team.

The Speirs Lock regeneration initiative was instigated by the Glasgow Canal Regeneration Partnership (GCRP), a partnership between Glasgow City Council and ISIS Waterside Regeneration, supported by British Waterways Scotland. Speirs Locks and the canal network had been severed from the city centre by the construction of the M8 motorway in the 1960's. This inner city motorway was routed to run through 29 planned Comprehensive Development Areas centered on areas of tenemental slum clearance including the Speirs Locks/ Garscube Landscape Link site in Cowcaddens and Woodside. The increasing obsolescence of the Forth and Clyde Canal and the construction of the motorway accelerated the decline of the once thriving trading centre of Speirs Locks. The GCRP initiated the masterplan project as a catalyst to signal the wider transformation of the Speirs Locks area which had degenerated to comprise 14 hectares of low grade industrial and derelict land. The masterplan was intended to unlock the development opportunities of the site. It was developed following an extensive process of engagement with local residents, businesses and stakeholders from which a strategy called "Growing the Place" evolved. The approach focussed on opening up new links and connections to the canal whilst cultivating the idea of a cultural quarter through high profile arts and public realm initiatives. This will encourage people to rediscover the area which would, in turn, drive the next stage of regeneration. This approach is at the heart of the significance and originality of the design.

The project's impact and importance has been recognised most significantly through its selection by the Scottish Government from an initial project list of sixty eight as one of the eleven exemplar projects for the Scottish Sustainable Communities Initiative (SSCI). The Scottish Sustainable Communities Initiative(SSCI) was launched in June 2008 to encourage the creation of places, designed and built to last, where a high quality of life can be achieved. The Initiative is about creating places which are ambitious and inspiring, raising standards and developing skills in design, architecture and sustainable construction. It is also about taking a long term view and is concerned with outcomes and delivery. These exemplar projects have been selected as best capable of demonstrating how sustainable communities can be delivered.

The project has also been recognised with various national award wins and commendations including a BURA Award in 2009 (British Urban Regeneration Awards) for Strategy and Masterplanning – Winner. The judges' citation states; "The project illustrates the effectiveness of delivery by the joint venture vehicle. It demonstrates best practice in terms of the community and stakeholder engagement process, to produce a framework consistent with the sustainability charter. It makes excellent use of design guidelines and the design process. The significance of the submission is not simply in the masterplan itself but the approach being taken which successfully integrates and sets best practice in all of the elements that are required to deliver transformational and sustainable regeneration." It was also commended at the Scottish Awards for quality in Planning 2009 in the Community Involvement Category. The judges commented; "the project is a great example of how disconnected and underused urban areas can be reinvigorated through a multi-agency approach with strong leadership and a pragmatic approach to development. The project has a clear development plan basis and is realising its objectives."

The project has been published in Urban Design Magazine, Issue 114, spring 2010 and Prospect Magazine, spring 2009. It was also exhibited at the Scottish Sustainable Communities Exhibition, The Lighthouse, Glasgow in 2009.

The project was initiated in 2008 and was completed in 2009.

The key requirement of the masterplan was that it should act as a catalyst for the economic and social regeneration of the 14 hectare site and re-establish the area as a landmark location and future destination, thus allowing this once thriving but now anonymous place to be re-discovered. The Masterplan process has been so successful in changing perceptions that The Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama (RSAMD) and the National Theatre for Scotland have joined Scottish Opera as occupants of the Speirs Locks site.

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output 2  
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